



POLICY No. Communications 2024-01 – Commemorative Observances, Proclamations & Flags Policy

Policy Type: Communications / Legislative Services Policy

Subsection:

Policy Title: Commemorative Observances, Proclamations & Flags Policy

Policy Number:

Policy Approved By: Northumberland County Council

Effective Date: March 20, 2024

Reviewed:

Revised: April 16, 2025

Applicable To:

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Commemorative Observances, Proclamations & Flags Policy Statement

To establish a standard for how and when Northumberland County will receive and process special requests to recognize dates of historic, cultural, or societal significance with proclamations by County Council, coloured light displays at County Headquarters, raising a flag on the County's Community flagpole, and lowering flags at County Headquarters.

Definitions

Community Flag: A flag, often provided by a community group or organization, which recognizes a significant date, event, cause, organization or community group.

Community Flagpole: Refers to the flagpole used to display community flags at Northumberland County Headquarters, located at 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg.

Community Flag Raising: Means the raising of a community flag on the Northumberland County Community Flagpole for the purpose of raising awareness.

County: Means the Corporation of the County of Northumberland.

Proclamation(s): Means a formal public statement by Northumberland County Council during a County Council meeting, designating a period of time (day, week, month) in recognition of an event, cause, or organization.

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Half-masting: Means to lower flags approximately halfway up the post or pole. Flying flags at half-mast is a symbol of respect or mourning, or to commemorate significant dates.

Order of Precedence: Means the positioning of flags in priority of importance, order, or rank.

Lighting Request(s): Refers to a request to illuminate the front of the Northumberland County Headquarters building a specific colour to commemorate an event, organization, or proclamation request.

Northumberland County Facilities: Refers to all facilities owned and/or operated by the Corporation of the County of Northumberland.

Objective(s)

The objective of this policy is to establish a standard and guidelines for the processing and approving of requests related to proclamations, coloured light displays at County Headquarters, flag raisings and half-masting flags. The policy also includes etiquette for the flying of flags on County property.

Scope

This policy applies to all requests for proclamations, lighting, and flag raisings or lowerings received by the County.

Review

N/A

Attachments

N/A

Date of new or revised policy:

N/A

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Procedures

1.0 Proclamations

Requests may be submitted to the County Clerk for a formal proclamation to be read by Northumberland County Council in recognition of a commemorative date.

Proclamation Criteria

- Proclamation requests must provide background information about the organization, cause or event being proclaimed.
- Repeat requests are to be submitted to the Clerk on an annual basis.
- Proclamation requests must be relevant to County services or pertain to an organization, cause, event, or type of recognition that relates to the economic, social, and cultural fabric of the Northumberland community.

Proclamations at the request of a Member of County Council will be included on the relevant Standing Committee / County Council meeting agenda. The County of Northumberland has the authority to approve or deny any requests for proclamations. The Clerk or their designate has been delegated the authority to approve or deny proclamation requests that do not adhere to the required criteria.

Proclamations must demonstrate respect for the residents of Northumberland County. They may be issued to recognize the following:

- Public awareness campaigns.
- Arts and cultural celebrations.
- Days of remembrance.

Proclamations will not be issued for the following:

- Matters of political controversy, ideological or religious beliefs or individual conviction.
- Events or organizations with no direct connection to Northumberland County.
- Campaigns or events contrary to County policies or by-laws.
- Campaigns intended for private profit-making purposes.
- Businesses or commercial enterprises.
- Discriminatory or inflammatory matters.
- Matters intended to incite hatred or disorder.
- Matters which are untruthful.

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Application Process

All requests for proclamations shall be made through the Proclamation Request form, available on the Northumberland County website.

Proclamation requests must be made at least four (4) weeks in advance of the requested issuance date.

All proclamation requests will be reviewed by the Clerk, or their designate, to determine if they meet the listed criteria. The Clerk will notify the requestors whose proclamation requests do not meet the proclamation criteria.

3.0 Lighting Requests

Lighting Request Criteria

Organizations within Northumberland County can request that the front of the Northumberland County Headquarters building be illuminated in a particular colour to commemorate an event or date of significant for a maximum length of one (1) week or seven (7) days, unless otherwise approved by the Chief Administrative Officer

Lights are only visible during evening hours and visibility may range, depending on the chosen colour and time of year.

Requests are received and approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Lighting requests must be made at least four (4) weeks in advance of the requested observance date.

Lighting requests will be considered for:

- Public awareness campaigns
- Charitable fundraising causes, initiatives, or events.
- Arts and cultural celebrations.
- Days of remembrance.
- Other issues of importance in Northumberland County.

Requests will not be considered:

- Matters of political controversy, ideological or religious beliefs or individual conviction.
- Events or organizations with no direct connection to Northumberland County.
- Campaigns or events contrary to County policies or By-laws.
- Campaigns intended for profit-making purposes.
- Businesses or commercial enterprises.

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- Discriminatory or inflammatory matters.
- Matters intended to incite hatred or disorder.
- Matters which are untruthful.

Northumberland County reserves the right refuse lighting requests.

Accountability Framework

- I. Communications staff shall inform the Manager of Facilities of an event that requires the lighting of County Headquarters.
- II. The Manager of Facilities is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and established procedures at Northumberland County Facilities.

4.0 Flag raising and lowering

Northumberland County flag locations:

- **County Headquarters**, 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg – 3 flagpoles and 1 Community Flagpole
- **Golden Plough Lodge**, 983 Burnham St, Cobourg – 2 flagpoles
- **Provincial Offences Office and Courts**, 860 William Street, Cobourg – 2 flagpoles
- **Cramahe Shared Emergency Services Base**, 232 Croft Street, Colborne – 3 flagpoles
- **Roseneath shared Emergency Services Base**, 9160 County Road 45, Roseneath – 3 flagpoles
- **Trent Hills Shared Emergency Services Base**, 50 Doxsee Avenue South, Campbellford – 3 flagpoles and 2 building-mounted flags

Only flags located at Northumberland County Headquarters in Cobourg are subject to flag raising and lowering protocols.

Community flags are limited to the County's Community Flagpole, located at 555 Courthouse Road in Cobourg.

Legislative Authority and Interpretation

The *Municipal Act, 2001* permits municipalities to pass by-laws to establish policies under spheres of jurisdiction.

For procedural matters not found in this policy, reference may be made to the [National Flag of Canada etiquette](#).

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Accountability Framework

- III. The Communications Department, in consultation with the Legislative Services Division and with the Chief Administrative Officer, shall inform the Manager of Facilities of an event that requires the lowering of the flags.
- IV. The Clerk and Manager of Facilities are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and established procedures at Northumberland County Facilities.

Displaying the Flag(s)

Northumberland County follows the order of precedence, established by the Department of [Canadian Heritage](#), when flying flags.

The National Flag of Canada will always be displayed in the position of honour, unless a Royal Standard is to be displayed.

Northumberland County facilities may display the following flags: The National Flag of Canada, Provincial Flag of Ontario, Northumberland County flag, and other flags otherwise approved by County Council.

The number of flags displayed is dependent upon the number of flag poles available. Only one flag may be displayed per flagpole.

If a County property has one flagpole, the National Flag of Canada shall be flown. If a County property has two flagpoles, the National Flag of Canada and County flag shall be flown. If a County property has three flagpoles, the National Flag of Canada, the Provincial Flag of Ontario and the County flag shall be flown.

In a line of three flags, the National Flag of Canada will be flown in the centre. The Provincial Flag of Ontario will be flown on the left, and the County flag will be flown on the right, as seen by the observer.

Flags must be maintained in excellent condition and conform to the County's Flag Policy.

The Northumberland County flag shall not be used for commercial purposes by any external organization.

Consistent with the National Flag of Canada etiquette:

- Flags shall be flown on separate poles;
- Flags shall be flown at the same height;
- Flags flown in a group shall all be the same size;
- Flags flying at half-mast will follow the County's policy and guidelines.

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Permanent Flags at Northumberland County Headquarters, 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg

The National Flag of Canada, the Provincial Flag of Ontario, and the Northumberland County flag shall be flown outside 555 Courthouse Road, on three flagpoles located near the main entrance.

The National, Provincial and County Flags shall also be displayed in Council Chambers, along with the flags of the seven member municipalities of Northumberland (the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand, the Municipality of Brighton, the Town of Cobourg, the Township of Cramahe, the Township of Hamilton, the Municipality of Port Hope, and the Municipality of Trent Hills), the flag of Alderville First Nation, and any other flags approved by Council.

Maintenance and disposal of flags must be done in accordance with the National Flag of Canada etiquette.

Half-Masting

Flags are flown at the half-mast position as a symbolic expression of collective mourning.

Half-masting may occur at Northumberland County's 555 Courthouse Road location or specific locations, subject to the Policy provisions.

The duration of half-masting will be determined by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer, and may be:

- a) From time of notification of death until sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial service, or
- b) From notification of death until sunset the next day, and from sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial service, or
- c) From sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial service, or
- d) For a period of one week.

When the Canada flag is flown at half-mast, all other adjacent flags will also be flown at half-mast.

Any other circumstance that is in question and is not contained in this policy will be at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Warden.

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Lowering of Flags to Half-Mast

All flags including the National, Provincial, County and Community (if raised during the period) Flags will be lowered to half-mast at Northumberland County's 555 Courthouse Road location in the event of the death of:

- i. The Sovereign, or a member of the Royal family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (i.e.) husband or wife, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister;
- ii. Governor General of Canada, current or past;
- iii. Prime Minister of Canada, current or past;
- iv. Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, current or past;
- v. Member or former Member of the House of Commons (MP) for the riding;
- vi. Member or former Member of the Legislative Assembly (MPP) for the riding;
- vii. Special events recognized by the Canadian Government that recognize the death of a universal figure(s);
- viii. Special events recognized by the Provincial Government that recognize the death of a universal figure(s);
- ix. In the event of national or provincial tragedy and where the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario has lowered their flags; and
- x. In remembrance on the anniversary of a national or provincial tragedy and where the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario has lowered their flags.

The County Flag will be lowered to half-mast at Northumberland County's 555 Courthouse Road location in the event of the death of:

- i. A member of Northumberland County Council, current or past;
- ii. A member of one of the Member municipal Councils, current or past;
- iii. A current Northumberland County employee;
- iv. A resident of Northumberland County, who is a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, killed while deployed on operations;
- v. A member of Alderville First Nation Band Council;

According to the rules established by the Federal Government under the [Holidays Act](#) (R.S.C. c. H-5), the Canadian flag must always be flown at full mast on Victoria Day and Canada Day, unless the flag is at half-mast for the death of the Monarch, the current Prime Minister or the current Governor General. The flag must be flown at full mast on the day the new Monarch is proclaimed.

Half-masting at County of Northumberland facilities in respect of a person(s) not specifically identified in this section may occur at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Warden, as a symbolic gesture of collective community mourning.

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Special Days of Remembrance

All flags including the National, Provincial, County and Community (if raised during the period) at Northumberland County's 555 Courthouse Road location will be half-masted on the following dates from sunrise to sunset. If the date of recognition falls on a weekend, these timelines may be adjusted slightly to accommodate staffing resources.

- April 9: National Day of Remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge
- April 28: National Day of Mourning (Workers' Mourning Day)
- June 23: National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
- September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- December 6: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- November 11: Remembrance Day

Community Flag Raisings on Community Flagpole

The following criteria shall be applied to the flags permitted to be flown at the County Headquarters on the community flagpole:

- I. All community flag raisings take place on the community flagpole at 555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg;
- II. It is the responsibility of the requesting organization to submit an application for a community flag raising and requests will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis;
- III. Community flag raisings will not necessarily include a photo opportunity. Requests for flag photo opportunities should be directed to the County's Director of Communications and Information Technology for review and consideration;
- IV. Organizations with approved flag raising requests are required to provide a flag to the County Clerk and other information pertaining to their flag raising in advance of the flag raising;
- V. The County will fly flags on the community flagpole based on specific criteria:
 1. in connection with a particular event by an organization to celebrate achievement; or
 2. a charitable or non-profit organization to help increase public awareness of their programs and activities; or
 3. an organization that has achieved national or international distinction or made a significant contribution to the community, or
 4. a charitable or non-profit organization that has helped to enhance Northumberland County in a positive manner;
 5. an organization's flag shall be flown no more than once per calendar year;

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6. a flag shall be flown for a period of up to one week, or for the duration of the associated event, whichever is less, unless otherwise approved by the Chief Administrative Officer.
7. organizations shall be required to submit flag raising requests on an annual basis;
8. flags shall only be raised and lowered on those business days that County Headquarters is open;
9. flags may be flown on the community flagpole without a submission by an organization at the discretion of the Warden, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk, as a symbolic gesture of collective community spirit and support.

Northumberland County will not approve requests for the use of the community flagpole for flags that:

- represent commercial interests;
- represent political causes;
- represent religious occasions/events; or
- support groups, organizations or events that promote beliefs contrary to County Core Values or any County policy, or pose a reputational risk to the County.

Requests will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. If a County event requires a flag to be raised, the County event flag will take precedence over any applications for a community flag raising request received.

Application Process

All Community Flag Raising requests shall be made through the Community Flag Raising Request form, available on the Northumberland County website.

Community Flag Raising requests must be made at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the flag raising.

Administering the policy

Requests will be reviewed by the Clerk or their designate, who will present the request to the CAO for approval. If approved, the flag request will be noted on the relevant County Council agenda, under 'New/Other Business', for information only.

The Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk will consult on any issues that are not outlined within this policy.

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Right of refusal

A request may be denied if the organization:

- undertakes practices or philosophy that are contrary to Northumberland County policies or by-laws;
- is deemed to be inappropriate or offensive in nature; or
- supports discrimination, prejudice, political or religious movements.

County Council will be notified of approved and denied requests to raise a flag on the County's community flagpole.

Flag Size

The size of the flag shall be no smaller than 3' x 5' and no larger than 4' x 6'.

Policy Review

Amendments

The Communications Department, in collaboration with the Legislative Services Division will ensure that this policy is regularly reviewed and remains relevant to the needs of Northumberland County, in accordance with legislative requirements and best practices.

Restrictions – other Flags

No other flags other than those sited in this policy shall be flown on County-owned properties, unless approved by County Council.